

The 2026 Criminal Justice Institute Faculty

Excellence and Experience for Every Session

Distinguished Speakers

Justice Theodora Gaïtas (she/her)

Justice Gaïtas serves as a justice on the Minnesota Supreme Court. She will become the Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court upon the retirement of Chief Justice Natalie Hudson on September 30th. Justice Gaïtas is the only sitting justice to have experience serving on all three levels of the Minnesota Judicial Branch, as she previously served as a judge on the Minnesota Court of Appeals and as a judge in the Fourth Judicial District.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith M. Ellison

Attorney General Keith Ellison represented Minnesota’s 5th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives from 2007 to 2019, Before being elected to Congress, Attorney General Ellison served four years in the Minnesota House of Representatives. Prior to entering elective office, he spent 16 years as an attorney specializing in civil rights and defense law, including five years as executive director of the Legal Rights Center. Attorney General Ellison received his law degree from the University of Minnesota Law School.

Caleb J. Anthony

Ramsay Law Firm, PLLC
Roseville

Molly K. Bruner

Scott County Community Corrections
Shakopee

Carolyn Agin Bruno

Bruno Law, PLLC
Minneapolis

Frederic K. Bruno

Bruno Law, PLLC
Minneapolis

Judge Jean E. Burdorf

Fourth Judicial District
Minneapolis

Anthony W. Bushnell

Crown College
Saint Bonifacius

The Honorable Sean Cahill

Fourth Judicial District
Minneapolis

Jodie L. Carlson

Minnesota Court of Appeals
Saint Paul

Judge Leonardo Castro

Second Judicial District
Saint Paul

John J. Choi

Ramsey County Attorney
Saint Paul

Wesley J. Cornwell

Amicus Law PC
Saint Paul

Clare A. Diegel

Hennepin County Attorney's Office
Minneapolis

Judge Bridgid E. Dowdal

Tenth Judicial District
Center City

Attorney General

Keith M. Ellison

Minnesota Attorney General
Saint Paul

Anders J. Erickson

Johnson Erickson Criminal Defense
Minneapolis

Judge Juanita C. Freeman

Tenth Judicial District
Stillwater

Justice Theodora K. Gaïtas

Minnesota Supreme Court
Saint Paul

Jon Geffen

The Legal Revolution
Minneapolis

Marsh J. Halberg

Halberg Criminal Defense
Bloomington

Harry M. Jacobs

Thompson & Jacobs PLLC
Minneapolis

Courtney R. Jasper

Poul Haas Government Relations
Saint Paul

Karen Kampa Jaszewski

State Court Administrator's Office
Saint Paul

Julie A. Jonas

University of St. Thomas
School of Law
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Nicole A. Kettwick

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Office of the Minnesota Appellate
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Saint Paul

Erica L. Madore

Anoka County Attorney's Office
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Linda M. McBrayer

Minnesota Sentencing Commission
Saint Paul

Chief Judge Kerry W. Meyer

Fourth Judicial District
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Cathryn Y. Middlebrook

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Kelly Lynn Mitchell

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Natalia Mydraga

Momentum Advocacy
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Kristi A. Nielsen

Office of the Minnesota
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Christopher X. Nguyen

Aberrant Law PLLC
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Alan F. Pendleton

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Adam E. Petras

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Jennifer L. Pradt

The Law Offices of Jennifer L. Pradt
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Thomas R. Ragatz

Office of the Minnesota Attorney
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Charles A. Ramsay

Ramsay Law Firm, PLLC
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Nathaniel J. Reitz

Minnesota Sentencing Commission
Saint Paul

David J. Risk

Halberg Criminal Defense
Bloomington

Judge Colette Routel

Fourth Judicial District
Minneapolis

Judge Jon Schmidt

Minnesota Court of Appeals
Saint Paul

Professor David A. Schultz

Hamline University and
University of St. Thomas
School of Law
Saint Paul/Minneapolis

Jeffrey S. Sheridan

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AUGUST 19 & 20, 2026

Minnesota CLE Conference Center

The 61st Annual

Criminal Justice Institute

Navigating the Changing Currents of Minnesota Justice

FEATURED SESSIONS

White Collar Crackdown – Fraud Enforcement in Minnesota in 2026

– Harry M. Jacobs
Kristi A. Nielsen
Joseph H. Thompson

Federalism, Sovereignty and Criminal Enforcement in Minnesota

– Professor David A. Schultz

DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS

- **Justice Theodora Gaïtas**
State of the Judiciary Address
- **Minnesota Attorney General Keith M. Ellison**
Minnesota Attorney General's Address

PLUS

- Conference Luncheon at Fogo de Chão
- 3 Tracks – New Developments, DWI, Trial Advocacy Masterclasses

In-Depth Analysis of New Developments Impacting Criminal Justice in Minnesota

Essential Updates

- New Cases
- New Legislation

Cutting-Edge Topics

- Federalism and State Sovereignty
- Using AI

Trial Advocacy

- Cross-examination
- Appeals

Critical Discussions

- Juvenile Justice
- Fraud



The 61st Annual Criminal Justice Institute

WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY, AUGUST 19 & 20, 2026

Attend In Person

Minnesota CLE Conference Center
600 Nicollet Mall, Suite 370, Minneapolis

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A Special Thank You to Our Esteemed Faculty

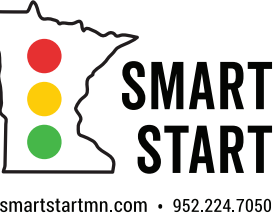
The presenters appearing in this program donated their time, effort and expertise for the benefit of the criminal justice system and the advancement of the legal profession. We thank them for their dedication and generosity.

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Keeping You and Your Criminal Practice at the Forefront of Advocacy and Innovation

DAY 1 – AUGUST 19

8:15 – 8:45 a.m.
CHECK-IN & CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:45 – 9:00 a.m.
WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

PLENARY SESSIONS

9:00 – 9:30 a.m.
State of the Judiciary
– Justice Theodora Gaïtas

9:30 – 9:35 a.m.
BREAK

9:35 – 10:05 a.m.
Minnesota Attorney General's Update
– Minnesota Attorney General Keith M. Ellison

10:05 – 10:15 a.m.
NETWORKING & EXHIBITOR BREAK

10:15 – 11:15 a.m.
The Recent Minnesota Decisions Every Criminal Attorney Needs to Know
– Amy R. Lawler
Adam E. Petras

FEATURED KEYNOTE

11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
White Collar Crackdown – Fraud Enforcement in Minnesota in 2026
In 2026 Minnesota has been the epicenter of some of the largest federal and state fraud crackdowns in recent U.S. history. This session discusses state and federal cooperation for cases arising out of recent fraud scandals, prosecutions of Medicaid fraud, new legislation, crypto, digital assets, and other financial crimes.
– Harry M. Jacobs
Joseph H. Thompson
Kristi A. Nielsen

12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
LUNCH BREAK
Courtesy of Minnesota CLE

Enjoy lunch on your own or join your colleagues at Fogo de Chão for good food and great conversations.



1:00 – 1:45 p.m.
BREAKOUT A

101
Battling the Badge: Advanced Techniques for Cross-Examining the DWI Officer on SFTS and DRE Protocols
– Daniel J. Koewler
Charles A. Ramsay
David J. Risk
Jeffrey S. Sheridan

102
Applying Minnesota's New Aiding-and-Abetting Felony-Murder Standards to Old Convictions
– Anders J. Erickson
Robert I. Yount

103
From Geofences to License Plates: Litigating Digital Surveillance After State v. Contreras-Sanchez and Chatrie v. United States
– Shawn P. Webb

1:45 – 1:55 p.m.
NETWORKING & EXHIBITOR BREAK

1:55 – 2:40 p.m.
BREAKOUT B

201
The Science of Doubt: Advanced Strategies for Challenging Blood, Breath, and Urine Test Results
– Daniel J. Koewler
Charles A. Ramsay

202
3-Step Foolproof Hearsay Test and the Washington v. Crawford 6th Amendment Testimonial Rule
– Alan F. Pendleton

203
Evaluating Post-Conviction Remedies: Overlaps, Distinctions, and Strategic Choices for Clemency, Expungement, Clean Slate and More
– Clare A. Diegel
Jon Geffen
Carli E. Stark

2:40 – 2:50 p.m.
NETWORKING & EXHIBITOR BREAK

2:50 – 3:35 p.m.
BREAKOUT C

301
The Anatomy of an Implied Consent Challenge: Initial Filing, Discovery, Affirmative Defenses, and More
– Caleb J. Anthony
Daniel J. Koewler

302
Errors, Issues, and Impact: Appellate Advocacy for the Criminal Law Practitioner
– Jodie Carlson
Cathryn Middlebrook
Thomas Ragatz
Judge Jon Schmidt

303
Major Sentencing Changes Every Criminal Lawyer Needs to Know
– Linda M. McBrayer
Kelly Lynn Mitchell
Nathaniel J. Reitz

3:35 – 3:45 p.m.
NETWORKING & EXHIBITOR BREAK

3:45 – 4:45 p.m.
Rule 20 and Beyond – Practical and Ethical Considerations for Handling Difficult Clients and Clients with Difficulties

1.0 ethics credit applied for
– Anthony W. Bushnell
Erica Madore
Jennifer L. Pradt

4:45 – 5:15 p.m.
The Annual CJI Reception

DAY 2 – AUGUST 20

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.
CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

PLENARY SESSIONS

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
Minnesota State Court Judges Panel – A Practical Dialogue on Evidence, Courtroom Procedure, and 2026 Practice Dynamics
– Judge Jean E. Burdorf
Judge Leonardo Castro
Judge Bridgid E. Dowdal
Judge Juanita C. Freeman
Nicole A. Kettwick, moderator

10:00 – 10:05 a.m.
BREAK

10:05 – 10:50 a.m.
Fraud, Gun Control, Grooming, and More – What Passed and Didn't Pass – The 2026 Minnesota Legislative Update
– Courtney R. Jasper
Natalia Mydraga

10:50 – 11:00 a.m.
NETWORKING & EXHIBITOR BREAK

11:00 – 11:45 a.m.
Review of Important Recent U.S. Supreme Court Decisions
– Judge Colette Routel

11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Federalism, Sovereignty and Criminal Enforcement in Minnesota

The actions of federal agents in Minnesota in 2026, and the responses of citizens, jurists, and attorneys, are not just disputes about immigration enforcement, but constitutional questions about the limits of federal power over state sovereignty and civil liberties. This session analyzes 10th Amendment state sovereignty, local public safety polices, and the legal ramifications of federal tactical deployments and their intersection with state criminal court cases.
– Professor David A. Schultz

12:30 – 1:15 p.m.
LUNCH BREAK (on your own)

1:15 – 2:15 p.m.
BREAKOUT D

401
A New Day for Youth Justice – Analyzing the Impact and Readiness of Minnesota's New Juvenile Frameworks
– Molly K. Bruner
The Honorable Sean Cahill
John J. Choi

402 [2-hour session]
The Dirty Dozen – 12 Topics in 120 Minutes
– Marsh J. Halberg, moderator

1. Disabled Datamaster Fuel Cell
– Jeffrey A. Sheridan
2. Reducing Probation Violations
– Cory R. Tennison
3. NHSTA Manual Issues
– David J. Risk
4. The Legal Mind of William Shakespeare
– Jon Foss
5. Top 10 Legal Pet Peeves
– Michael J. Brandt
6. Jesse James and the 1896 Northfield Bank Robbery
– Councilor Brad Ness

2:15 – 2:30 p.m.
NETWORKING & EXHIBITOR BREAK

2:30 – 3:30 p.m.
BREAKOUT E

501
TECHNOLOGY 30-MINUTE QUICKTAKES
Getting Clients in the DIY Era of of Gemini, GhatGPT, and AI Summaries
– Ryan J. Tauer
5 Ways AI Can Help You Better Serve Your Clients
– Wesley J. Cornwell

7. The First Ten Minutes on a Death Scene
– Commander Jeff Schwab
8. Free the People Legal Advocacy Program
– Bernice B. Woods
9. Sleep CSI – Sleepwalking Homicides, Really?
– Dr. Michel A. Cramer Bornemann
10. Brady Giglio Obligations
– Marissa A. Lundgren
11. A View From the Bench
– Judge Gina M. Brandt
12. SBIRT for DWI Defendants
– Matthew L. Hartung

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Attend the limited online replay on **September 10 & 11, 2026**. The limited online replay includes select sessions. A moderator will be available to answer questions by e-mail.

All Attendees Will Receive:

- Minnesota DWI Laws Legal Quicksheet – updated March 2026
- 90 days of electronic access to the Linked Law Judges Criminal Benchbook – updated March 2026
- 90 days of electronic access to the LinkedLaw DWI Deskbook – newly updated June 2025
- 40% off all Deskbooks
- the 2026 Minnesota Criminal Code Book
- the ability to watch all Institute sessions for one year (not for CLE credit)
- electronic access to materials and PowerPoint slides during and up to one year after the Institute

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